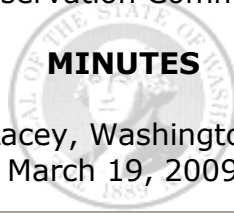


Washington State Conservation Commission Regular Meeting



Lacey, Washington
March 19, 2009

The Washington State Conservation Commission (Commission/WSCC) met in regular session on March 19, 2009 in Lacey, Washington. Commission Chair Lynn Bahrych called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

ATTENDEES

Lynn Bahrych, Chair
Fred Colvin, Vice Chair
Jim Peters, Member
Lynn Brown, Member
Tracy Eriksen, Member
Lee Faulconer, Member
Melodie Selby, Member
Dean Longrie, Member

COMMISSION STAFF

Mark Clark, Executive Director
Ron Shultz, Policy Director
Tom Salzer, Technical Services Manager
Debbie Becker, Financial Services Manager
Stu Trefry, Puget Sound Regional Manager
Megan McCormack, Program Specialist
Larry Brewer, Southeast Regional Manager
Ray Ledgerwood, Program Facilitator

PARTNERS REPRESENTED DURING THIS MEETING:

John Larson, Washington Association of Conservation Districts (WACD)
Roylene Rides-at-the-Door, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
Nora Mena, Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA)
Rod Hamilton, Farm Services Agency (FSA)

GUESTS:

Dan Newhouse, Director, Washington State Department of Agriculture
David Giglio, Office of Financial Management
Kathy Whalen, Washington Association of District Employees (WADE)

Introductions & Partnership Reports

Roylene Rides-at-the-Door gave an update on NRCS and the available funds resulting from the current year Farm Bill. Lee Faulconer discussed the current WSDA legislative information. Lynn Bahrych gave Kudos to Commission Staff for a job well done on the 70th Anniversary. Dean Longrie shared what was current at WACD and that their Legislative days are coming up next week 3/24 to 26th. Dean also shared that the Clark county assessment is moving forward. Jim Peters shared that the tribes are having conversations with partners and working together to ensure compliance remains an important factor and doesn't get cut during the bad budget times. Rod Hamilton – the stimulus package, most of the money went to rural development (small projects in rural communities). FSA received \$175 million for their operating loan program, 80% is already out the door due to a huge backlog. ECP – approved in 10 counties, received about \$1 million, most of which is gone out in the field. John Larson shared that he is currently working with a consultant on a new WACD website. Kathy Whalen provided a WADE update.

Consent Agenda

Fred Colvin moved and Jim Peters seconded the motion to approve the January 15, 2009 Regular Business Meeting minutes. Motion carried.

Dan Newhouse, Director of the Department of Agriculture

WA State Department of Agriculture Director, Dan Newhouse attended the meeting to discuss the partnership between WSDA and the Commission. He feels in order to have a successful Ag industry we need to work together since we understand the farmers and have the relationships with them. He understands how important Conservation is and it goes hand in hand with a successful Ag industry. His pledge to the Commission is to find ways to continue working together to achieve our common goals and work through our differences. Fred Colvin would like him to keep open for opportunities to look at some farmland preservation, Ag opportunities. Jim Peters talked about the relationship between WSDA and the tribes. The relationship has not been bad in the past but they have not really gotten anywhere with Ag issues. He would like Director Newhouse to know that Ag and tribes have mutual goals. Tribes want farmers to continue to farm lands. Commissioners thanked Director Newhouse and appreciated him for taking the time out of his busy schedule to come and speak to them.

Finance

- **Livestock Cost Share proposal**

Debbie Becker provided the Commissioners with a Discussion DRAFT for the Livestock Cost Share program.

- **Grant Status**

Debbie presented a couple of different graphs showing the current status of grants for the 07-09 biennium.

Policy & Governmental

- **Update on Conservation Markets**

Ron Shultz gave an update on Conservation Markets. An analysis of existing models of Conservation markets around the country, they assessed the stakeholder interest and priorities for the market creation, evaluate alternatives for structuring as well as develop findings and recommendations. A landowner is able to obtain eco-credits which can then be sold.

- **Federal Funding Update**

The Governor's office has established an economic recovery cabinet to discuss the current economic situation. They are very driven to get money out the door and on the ground right away. The question is how the money is being driven into the various programs? Currently, we are looking at a couple of different funding opportunities, those include the PL566 program and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) grant opportunity. We also took a look at the AWEF funding opportunity. There were two proposals submitted, one on the Eastside and the other in Puget Sound. At this time, they have decided against submitting for AWEF.

A more combined effort to coordinate Federal Funding opportunities is happening in the office. We are keeping a list of multiple opportunities and continuously looking.

- **Legislative Update**

The Revenue forecast came out today and they are predicting a \$9 billion deficit. The Commission's agency request legislation bill is moving forward, currently it is up for executive session to be moved out of committee. A bill of concern for the Commission that is still moving is the Senator Pridemore bill which would suspend the Conservation Commission for two years.

- **OFP Update**

The Inter-agency meeting was held on March 18th. They reviewed the recommendations and took comments.

- **Incentives**

A proposal is in the works for a concept for some future work, visibility and role for the Commission. The proposals would enhance the service delivery of state incentive programs on working lands.

Tracy Eriksen moved that staff continue to study the concept of the Commission and districts as the lead for coordination and delivery of incentive programs and report back to the Commission with a proposal. Lynn Brown seconded.

Motion passed.

Legal/Technical Services

- **Appointments**

Tom Salzer reported on the appointment process. There are currently 40 positions open this year. Applications have been received for all but about 9.

- **Elections**

There are 47 elections being held this year. At this point the paperwork has been processed for half and the average vote count is a little higher this year compared to last. An issue has emerged this year, write-in candidates. Staff are working with the Ag on issues relating to elections.

Lynn Brown moved we conform to state election law and make those changes today. Dean Longrie seconded.

Discussion

John Larson feels concern in implementing the changes to the elections today since we only have a couple more elections left in this season.

Fred Colvin moved for amendment, he would like to amend the motion to have the effective date of the notice during the 2010 cycle. Lee Faulconer seconded.

Original motion as amended passed.

District Operation

- **Distribution of Cost Share to Associate Supervisors & CD Staff**
Staff are working with the Assistant Attorney General on this DRAFT policy.
- **Districts and/or Supervisors in "Good Standing"**
Stu Trefry provided information regarding Districts and/or Supervisors in "Good Standing".
- **DRAFT Policy – WSCC Board member and Staff responsibilities at CD meetings**
The purpose of this policy is for the Commission to provide guidance to WSCC members and staff on their role in situations where members and staff believe there is inappropriate conduct by participants at a meeting attended by the member or staff and the meeting is either sponsored by the WSCC or is a meeting of a conservation district board. Dean Longrie asked, once a situation has been documented, where would the documentation go? Ron clarified that this policy is for inappropriate conduct towards Commission staff members and Commissioners. Melodie feels that once this policy is complete and adopted, we should share it with the districts. This policy will come before the Commission at their May meeting.
- **Crab Creek livestock producers CRM**
There are water quality issues with livestock producers living in the Crab Creek area. There is a lot of work going on between Ecology, WSCC and the producers on trying to alleviate this problem or if any changes have been made since the observations were made. In the early spring, the plan is to bring the group back together and check on the progress.
- **Klickitat CDs potential merger & boundaries**
Ray Ledgerwood reported that there has been one meeting between the Klickitat CDs. They both agreed they wanted to talk with their constituents. Currently they are planning on slowing down the merging process and continuing to work on their long range plans.
- **Conservation planning protocol**
Ray Ledgerwood reported that he has received feedback from all the districts which were generally really positive. There is another meeting scheduled in the spring on this subject.
- **District training activities**
Ray Ledgerwood reported that 22 of the 30 spots have been filled for this training which will be held in July in Pullman.

Program/Field Operations

- **Irrigation Efficiencies**
Jon Culp provided a comprehensive update on the Irrigation and Columbia River programs.
- **Department of Ag Referrals**
Nora Mena provided an update on the Department of Ag referrals.
- **CREP Update**
Carol Smith reported that there are new practices of hedgerows, grass filters, and eligibility of horticulture. The first kick off meeting for these practices was May '06. Districts are particularly interested in the hedgerow practice as well as the horticulture. Whatcom CD helped tremendously on the Beaver management paper. The paper describes the various

ways to look at beaver activity. There are CREP projects which are more than 5 years old that have various beaver activities on them. The paper includes a table which states various levels of impact along with an appropriate response to that level of impact.

- **Dig It**

Lynn Bahrych updated Commissioners on the Dig It exhibit which will take place in May, 2010.

Public Comment

There were no comments from the public in attendance.

Regional Manager Report

Larry Brewer provided an update on the Regional Managers.

Commission Operations

- **09-11 Budget**

Mark Clark gave an update on the 09-11 Budget. As of right now, there is no concrete information available. As soon as more information on the budget does come out, he would like to convene a group to discuss our work for the May Commission meeting.

Chair's Comments

Lynn mentioned that at the work session from yesterday, a lot of information on Climate Change was brought forward. She feels that the Commissioners need a chance to think about the bottom line conclusions and how we can apply those to conservation.

Adjournment

Commission Chair Lynn Bahrych adjourned at 4:00 pm.